

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

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R 181430Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8412

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

USUN NEW YORK 285

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT OF SPAIN 2601

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, RQ, TD

SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER WILLIAMS' VIEWS ON PUERTO RICO

1. DURING DISCUSSION PRIMARILY DEVEOTED TO LAW OF THE SEA
OCT 17 (SEE POS 2600), I RAISED WITH TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO PRIME
MINISTER DR. ERIC WILLIAMS THE SUBJECT OF PUERTO RICO.

2. WILLIAMS WAS QUITE FIRM IN STATING THAT GOTT WOULD NOT PARTICIPATE
IN CUBAN EFFORT TO LOBBY FOR PUERTO RICAN INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT.
WHILE HE SAID THAT HE PERSONALLY FELT PUERTO RICO SHOULD
CHOOSE THE PATH OF INDEPENDENCE FROM USG, HE FULLY RECOGNIZED
THAT 95 PER CENT OF PUERTO RICAN PEOPLE DISAGREED WITH HIM AND
THAT THEIR WILL SHOULD BE RESPECTED. PRIME MINISTER RECOUNTED
HIS LONG FRIENDSHIP AND ASSOCIATION WITH MUNOZ MARIN, WITH
WHOSE POLITICAL CHOICE FOR PUERTO RICO HE NEVERTHELESS DISAGREED.
WHEN I ASKED HIS VIEWS AS TO THE FUTURE EVOLUTION OF PUERTO
RICAN DESIRES AND WHETHER HE FORESAW RAPID CHANGE IN PUBLIC
OPINION ON WHICH EXTERNAL CUBAN CAMPAIGN COULD BE BUILT, WILLIAMS
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SAID HIS JUDGMENT AS LONG STUDENT OF PUERTO RICAN AFFAIRS WAS THAT

BENEFICIARIES OF OPERATION BOOTSTRAP FORMED BACKBONE OF PUERTO RICAN SOCIETY AND THAT IT WAS HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT THERE WOULD BE A SIGNIFICANT SHIFT OF OPINION TOWARD UNLOOSING THE TIES WITH USG IN FORESEEABLE FUTURE. HE ASSURED ME THAT GOTT WOULD MAKE NO SUCH ASSUMPTION AND WAS CLEARLY AWARE OF OVERWHELMING CHOICE OF PUERTO RICAN PEOPLE EVEN IF IT DID NOT NECESSARILY AGREE.

3 I THEN TRVD TO FOCUS PRIME MINISTER ON QUESTION OF GOTT VOTING IN SUCH FORA AS COMMITTEE OF 24, WHERE GOTT ABSTENTION IN AUGUST HAD BEEN DIFFICULT FOR US TO UNDERSTAND. BEFORE I COULD OBTAIN CLEAR RESPONSE, HOWEVER, WE WERE INTERRUPTED BY SOME OF OUR JAPANESE HOSTS AND I WAS ABLE ESSENTIALLY ONLY TO REMIND HIM OF OUR CONCERN.

4. COMMENT: IT IS REASSURING TO HAVE THIS FORTHRIGHT STATEMENT OF WILLIAMS' VIEWS AND TO KNOW THAT WE ARE NOT LIKELY TO BE SURPRISED BY AN OUTRIGHT HOSTILE INITIATIVE ON PUERTO RICO. I AM STILL LESS SANGUINE HOWEVER, THAT WE CAN PERSUADE WILLIAMS NOT TO ABSTAIN ON VOTES IN UN FORA, BUT WE HAVE SOME BASIS TO CONTINUE THE DIALOGUE. THE NEXT TIME I AM ABLE TO CONTINUE THIS SUBJECT WITH WILLAIMS, I PLAN TO SUGGEST THAT HE MIGHT USEFULLY FIND AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE PUBLIC HIS CONSIDERABLE KNOWLEDGE OF PUERTO RICAN POLITICAL DYNAMICS IN ORDER TO COUNTER IMPRESSION EMERGING IN LOCAL PRESS HERE FROM PROPAGANDA OF PR SOCIALIST PARTY, CUBANS, AND OTHERS THAT PUERTO RICANS ARE CRYING FOR INDEPENDENCE FROM IMPERIALIST MASTERS.
RICH

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